

# **PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD**

**MONDAY, JULY 23, 2007**

**3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II**

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:02 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Chatterjee, Kreider, Young, Fisher and Wallace present. Absent: Spraul-Schmidt and Raser.

## **MINUTES**

The Historic Conservation Board unanimously approved the minutes of the June 4, 2007 meeting as amended (motion by Young, second by Chatterjee) and the June 18 and July 9, 2007 meetings (motion by Chatterjee, second by Young).

## **SPECIAL EXCEPTION AND DD REVIEW, 31 E. COURT STREET, COURT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a staff report on a request for a special exception. She reminded the Board that it had considered this proposal at its meeting on June 4, 2007. At that meeting, project architect Bernie Kiessling estimated the façade would be 60% transparent and would not require a special exception. After the storefront was redesigned to address the Board's comments, the transparency was only 48% and required a special exception to the Zoning Code. Ms. Kellam said that staff was recommending approval of the special exception.

## **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Kreider) to approve a special exception from §1411-21 Ground Floor Transparency finding that such relief from the literal interpretation of the Zoning Code:

1. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district; and
2. Will not be materially detrimental to the public health safety, and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity where the property is located.

## **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, HILLSIDE REVIEW & ZONING VARIANCES, 1618 SYCAMORE STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report for the construction of a rooftop deck and a one-story garage at 1618 Sycamore Street. Ms. Cowden reminded the Board that the applicant, Gale Sheldon, most recently appeared at the Board's November 20, 2006 meeting. At that time, the Board suggested that Ms. Sheldon modify the pitch of the garage roof to avoid blocking existing windows on the rear elevation and to match the slope of the house's roof. Staff and the Board indicated that cutting the deck into the roofline might eliminate the necessity for a height variance.

Ms. Cowden described the current proposal and outlined staff's concerns and suggestions. She explained that the proposed addition exceeded the maximum building envelope by 1'-1" on one side and required a Zoning Variance.

In response to Mr. Kreider, Ms. Cowden stated that the garage could sufficiently be reduced in width so that a Zoning Variance was unnecessary.

Ms. Wallace asked what the view might be from a deck on the garage. Ms. Cowden responded that the deck would look out over the alley and adjacent properties. Ms. Cowden affirmed for Ms. Wallace that the deck would comprise the applicant's only private outdoor space.

Ms. Cowden confirmed for Mr. Young that the Prospect Hill Historic District conservation guidelines did not prohibit vinyl siding.

Ms. Sheldon addressed the Board stating that a rooftop deck above her garage would not be as safe or offer as nice a view as a rooftop deck. She felt that adding windows to the north side of the garage would create a security issue and objected to reducing the footprint, stating that she needed the space for storage. Ms. Sheldon explained that the drawings were inaccurate and said she would be using Wolverine triple 3" vinyl siding for the garage.

Mr. Kreider stated that windows in the garage would create a better project for the applicant and her neighbors. He suggested that a gate next to the garage would secure the yard from trespassers. Ms. Sheldon responded that she intended to install a gate. She said that windows represented an added expense to her limited budget and that security bars would be necessary.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Kreider) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed addition and rooftop deck with the following conditions:
  - a. The width of the garage shall be reduced by at least 1'-1" to eliminate the need for a Zoning Variance.
  - b. Window openings shall be incorporated in the first story of the garage addition's north elevation.
  - c. The reveal of the siding selected to clad the garage addition shall not exceed 3".
  - d. Final plans and specifications accurately showing the proposed new construction shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.
2. Deny the necessary Zoning Variance for the proposed addition to exceed the maximum building envelope by 1'-1" on one side, finding that:
  - a. The condition giving rise to the variance was created by the owner and is therefore unjustified.
  - b. Granting the requested variance is not in the interest of historic conservation.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION, FREDERICK E. AND CATHERINE BULLERDICK HOUSE, 4321 HAMILTON AVENUE, NORTHSIDE**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a National Register nomination for the Frederick E. and Catherine Bullerdick House at 4321 Hamilton Avenue in Northside. She stated that the property included a 1907 American Foursquare residence designed by W.W. Franklin. The house retains numerous original decorative features including murals and stenciling painted by F. Pedretti's Sons.

Ms. Kellam summarized the National Register criterion for eligibility. The nomination asserted that the Bullerdick House met Criterion C for listing in the National Register. Staff felt the nomination, as currently written, did not present sufficient documentation to support this argument. W.W. Franklin may have been a skilled practitioner and a capable architect, but based on the materials presented to date, staff questioned whether the Bullerdick House represented the work of a recognized master as dictated under Criterion C. Ms. Kellam expressed concerns that modifications to the roof and porch have negatively impacted the house's design integrity.

Ms. Kellam suggested that the Pedretti murals merited greater attention. Photographs of the murals and stencils in the nomination were insufficient, and this artwork was not placed in the larger

context of Pedretti's other residential commissions. Additional research about the murals/stencils alone could strengthen the nomination and possibly establish the building's eligibility. Ms. Kellam pointed out that the nomination contained little about the Bullericks and left the question of the family's importance unanswered.

Mr. Senhauser expressed his concern that the nomination was thin and asked staff if it would have a better chance if the house represented an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style. Mr. Forwood responded that there would be a better argument.

Margo Warminski, the nomination author, responded that she felt the house was an excellent American Foursquare, which can also be found in North Avondale, Hyde Park and Clifton. She was open to conducting additional research that could strengthen the nomination.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Chatterjee, second by Young) to find that based on the information provided there is not sufficient evidence to justify that this property meets the criteria under Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, W. 4<sup>TH</sup> AND MCFARLAND STREETS, WEST FOURTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Urban Conservator William Forwood informed the Board that the applicant had requested the proposal be removed from the agenda. No action was necessary.

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 112 E. LIBERTY STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report for a preliminary design review of modifications to the Freestore/Foodbank facility at 112 E. Liberty Street. Ms. Cowden explained that although the facility was sound, it did not function efficiently for the Freestore/Foodbank employees and its clients. Ms. Cowden briefly summarized the proposal, which involves the demolition of contributing buildings at 1606 and 1608 Walnut Street for a new loading dock on Walnut Street and the construction of a new façade, waiting room and stair/elevator tower. Staff outlined general design issues regarding the proposal and indicated the Board should consider if the applicant could improve client services and the flow of supplies through the facility by modifying the interior layout instead of demolishing existing buildings on Walnut Street.

Robert E. Habel, BHDP Architecture, outlined the Freestore/Foodbank project for the Board. He presented drawings to illustrate the current and proposed floor plans, flow of donated goods and location of services. He stated that the organization had considered relocating elsewhere in the City and determined that the current site best served the organization's mission and its clients needs. Mr. Habel indicated the gates were needed to secure the loading area. Since the gates could not swing out into the public right-of-way, the design incorporated a framework to support a wrap-around gate and to visually hold the street edge.

In response to Mr. Young, Mr. Habel stated that lowering the Corwine Street loading dock would not be feasible.

Mr. Chatterjee pointed out that Over-the-Rhine has a limited amount of building stock. He asked if Mr. Habel had considered modifying the interior and/or moving the client entrance from Liberty to Corwine. Mr. Habel stated that they would investigate these options.

Curt Riber, Chairman of the Freestore/Foodbank, stated that 1606 and 1608 Walnut Street were dilapidated and vacant. In response, Ms. Cowden indicated that she had seen one person in 1606

Walnut Street and another individual entering the building. The Board suggested the applicant confirm the buildings were indeed vacant. Mr. Riber said the Freestore/Foodbank was trying to use their property efficiently and that their buildings must be handicapped accessible. He commented that they wanted to move truck traffic onto Walnut Street, which was wider and more commercial in character than Corwine.

Mr. Chatterjee inquired about the documentation necessary for demolition. Ms. Cowden responded that the Freestore/Foodbank would be required to submit the proper documentation for demolition. Mr. Forwood reminded the Board members that non-profit agencies were held to a different standard.

Jonathan Haddy, Vice President of Services for the Freestore/Foodbank, stated that three years ago the agency had 25,000 food visits and were projecting up to 60,000 food visits next year. He explained the inconveniences that the staff and clients face due to the lack of an elevator and the facility's limited handicapped accessibility. Mr. Haddy indicated that the agency expected to have 40,000 total food visits in the three days before Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Mr. Habel confirmed for Mr. Young that the proposed loading dock provided space for two semi-tractor trailers. Mr. Young stated that based on Mr. Haddy's comments, the Freestore/Foodbank received the majority of its visits at or around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Mr. Haddy concurred. In response to Mr. Young's inquiry, Mr. Haddy said that deliveries to Liberty Street were typically by van or truck during the year, with semis delivering supplies during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Mr. Young and other Board members suggested that if collections were taken at another location, such as Tennessee Avenue, the Liberty Street facility would not need the proposed loading dock.

Ms. Wallace commented that she felt the Liberty Street drop-off area was an eyesore, with donations often left on the street after hours. She asked if this situation could be investigated and improved as part of the larger project.

Mr. Riber stated that the Freestore/Foodbank took the drop-off situation seriously. He said the organization wanted to be a good neighbor and would work on a solution. Mr. Riber indicated the Freestore/Foodbank would be investing 5 million dollars in the renovation. He said that they had talked with their neighbors and that they were mindful of their needs.

Mr. Senhauser asked if they had researched alternative locations in the brewery and warehouse areas of Over-the-Rhine. Mr. Habel stated that his client had determined those locations would be difficult for their clients to access. Mr. Riber explained that the Liberty Street facility was centrally located and easily accessible from public transportation. Mr. Habel said that the Freestore/Foodbank had been gifted a building near Liberty Street for their administrative staff and the Cincinnati Cooks program. The Kids Café operates in Camp Washington. The Freestore/Foodbank needs to optimize the available space of the Liberty Street facility and to improve the interior flow.

Steve Hampton, resident of 110 E. McMillan and owner of 1622 Walnut Street, stated that only a few buildings fronted on Corwin Street and that Walnut Street was already heavily trafficked. He was concerned that traffic could back up due to the loading dock activity. He pointed out that the only gas station in Over-the-Rhine was located directly across the street from the proposed loading dock area and very close to a major intersection. He expressed his concern about demolishing buildings when the neighborhood already had numerous available vacant lots. He suggested that the Freestore/Foodbank people talk with interested neighborhood groups.

Margo Warminski, Cincinnati Preservation Association, stated that the fence and gate were problematic and out of place. She felt that both of the buildings proposed for demolition could be rehabilitated. She encouraged the Freestore/Foodbank to look into ways to retain the buildings.

Julie Fay, Over-the-Rhine Community Council member, expressed her disappointment that the Freestore/Foodbank had not contacted the Community Council regarding their plans. She felt that the Walnut Street buildings could be rehabilitated. She said that residents appreciate the services but that multi-county donations should not be routed through the Over-the-Rhine location. She said that residents see problems with the donation drop-off site and suggested that all clothes donations be dropped off at a different site. She said that the proposed fence and gate were fortress-like and did not enhance the neighborhood. She said that residents had questions and invited the Freestore/Foodbank officials to come the Community Council meeting.

Mr. Habel said that they had talked with officials of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce about their plans.

Vermel Perkins, resident of 1808 Vine Street and a member of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council, stated that she felt that the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce did not speak for the neighborhood residents.

In response to Ms. Wallace, Mr. Haddy stated that Walnut Street was easier and wider for truck movement and felt that there were no obstacles to obtaining a curb cut from the City. He said that they would receive approximately three trucks, box or tractor-trailers, per day.

Mr. Senhauser stated that the Board had heard the reactions and questions from residents.

**ADJOURN**

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

---

William L. Forwood  
Urban Conservator

---

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_